

CLARIFYING



COACHING

Magdalena Mook

For decades, many individuals within organizations perceived coaching as a remedial intervention to correct professional or personal shortcomings. As awareness of and participation in coaching have grown, this perception has shifted. Today, organizations of all sizes are leveraging the proven power of professional coaching to develop stronger leaders, better communicators, more productive employees and increasingly positive people.

However, as the popularity of coaching grows, misconceptions around what coaching is persist, creating confusion for consumers.

By definition, coaching is distinct from other personal and organizational support professions. According to Karen Kimsey-House, co-founder and CEO of The Coaches Training Institute (CTI) and an International Coach Federation (ICF) Professional Certified Coach, many consumers misunderstand the relationship between coaching and therapy. "It's sometimes assumed that because we're having an emotional response to coaching, it's the

I partner with consultants often." Coaches provide a different kind of value to individuals and organizations by "inspiring clients to find their own answers instead of providing information."

Furthermore, professional coaches are distinct from friends or mentors you may turn to for support. "A good friend has your best interests at heart and, like a coach, his or her end goal is to help you become the best version of yourself. However, the very nature of that relationship means a friend is entangled in your affairs and may have a stake in the outcome," Mook says. "A professional coach isn't just a thoughtful listener and good confidant—she is acquainted with the necessary competencies to support you as you seek new perspectives, clarify your goals, and formulate a plan for action and growth."

When selecting a coach, Mook and Kimsey-House say the element of training is key. Because the coaching industry is self-regulating, it's certainly true that anyone can call him or herself a coach; however, this does not

"Possession of an ICF Credential is another clear sign of a coach's willingness to take his or her professional performance to the next level," Mook adds. To be eligible for an ICF Credential, a coach must complete coach-specific training; achieve a designated number of coaching experience hours; partner with a Mentor Coach; and demonstrate the appropriate understanding and mastery of ICF's definition of coaching, Code of Ethics and Core Competencies.

Industry research shows a positive link between coaches' credentials and client satisfaction. According to the 2014 Global Consumer Awareness Study, 93 percent of consumers who recalled that their coach held a credential or certification reported being "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with the coaching experience. ★

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domain of therapy," she reflects. "Therapy is not about feelings; it's a particular healing approach to dealing with patterns of behavior that are ineffective in our lives."

Coaching, on the other hand, capitalizes on areas where the client wants to move, says ICF CEO and Executive Director Magdalena Mook. "Coaching maximizes clients' potential by eliciting their best selves, establishing personally attuned goals and helping them map their journeys to success."

Kimsey-House says it's also important for consumers to understand the difference between consulting and coaching. "I believe that excellent consulting is a great thing. As a business owner, I find that having an expert to provide answers and solutions is very useful, so

mean he or she is equipped to be a coach. This is why Kimsey-House says organizations' decision-makers must exercise diligence. "If organizations want assurance of a quality outcome, they need to understand that developing the coaching skill set takes time and appropriate training. Fortunately, there are resources they can use to ensure that their coaches have received proper training."

"ICF's membership eligibility requirements make it easy for consumers to make an informed decision," Mook explains. "In addition to adhering to ICF's stringent Code of Ethics, ICF Members must complete at least 60 hours of approved coach-specific training, ensuring that they are well-prepared to serve their clients.



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01. Magdalena Mook.

02. Karen Kimsey-House, PCC.

Begin your search for an ICF-credentialed coach with the free Coach Referral Service housed at Coachfederation.org/crs.